

September 17, 2001

Tim Resch, Manager EAPEI
US AID, RRB 4.09-113
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20523-4900

Dear Tim:

This letter briefly reports results and impressions from the First Steering Committee meeting for the forthcoming EAPEI project, "Building Capacity for Integrated Coastal Management in Quan Ninh Province." In short, our meetings exceeded our expectations and clearly indicated a highly promising capacity of our partners not only to work with us to satisfy the technical aspects of the EAPEI project, but also to affect the emergence of an integrated coastal management framework throughout Vietnam.

Our three person team traveled to Hanoi, Haphong and Ha Long (Quan Ninh) from August 13 to 20 to review plans, activity schedules, assumptions and objectives for the EAPEI project. The team included Charles N. Ehler (Director National Ocean Service International Program Office and Acting Director of the Office of Coastal Resource Management), Dr. Greg Hodgson (Reef Check and UCLA), and myself.

We met with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to learn about their activities, interests, and expertise concerning integrated coastal management in Vietnam. We met with senior managers and staff of the National Center for Science and Technology (NCST) and its Haiphong Institute of Oceanography (HIO), Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI), Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE), Ha Long Bay Management Authority, local Haiphong and Halong governmental organizations, US Embassy, IUCN-Vietnam, World Wildlife Fund, World Bank, UN Development Program and others. We also had an opportunity to visit the project site and examine the various local land- and marine-use issues firsthand.

The EAPEI project will focus on management of Ha Long Bay in southern Quan Ninh. Major development issues promising to impact the future of this world renowned site include continued expansion of tourism, growth of container shipping from neighboring ports in Haiphong and Ha Long, deep water port construction in Ha Long city, expanding intensive shrimp pond aquaculture, coastal land reclamation, and institutional and stakeholder coordination. The management issues facing the future of Ha Long involve classic challenges of resource management with economic growth promotion. The

experiences and lessons we transfer and apply in Vietnam during the forthcoming project will be invaluable to Vietnam as it seeks to define ways to develop coastal areas.

During the visit we reviewed the Vietnamese governments technical capabilities in geographical information systems, data collection and application, management practices, decision making processes, and other coastal management issues. We discussed recent efforts relating to the field of integrated coastal management in Vietnam since the mid 1990s. Principal among these were the recent governmental designation of MOFI as responsible institution for national marine protected area (MPA) development and network management and various efforts to identify potential sites in Vietnam as special management status. Other relevant programs include a Global Environmental Facility MPA project at Hon Mun, recent Asia Development Bank coastal environmental analyses, management capacity building efforts on Con Dao Island, and prospective efforts of the IUCN-Vietnam Office to solicit funding from the GEF to promote ICM in the North Tonkin Archipelago.

We clarified the roles of the various participants in the EAPEI project. The leading Vietnamese central government institution is the National Centers for Natural Science and Technology. IUCN will serve as lead in-country coordinating office. The project office and technical support will primarily come from the HIO. The primary customer of our work will be directed toward the Ha Long Bay Management Authority and the Ha Long city government. Other governmental participants will include MOFI and MOSTE, including their provincial level extensions. Overall guidance and coordination, as well as access to international expertise, will be provided from the National Ocean Service of NOAA.

The ICM project activity timeline and activity objectives were confirmed. Accordingly, our first milestone will be a workshop to be held from March 25-30, 2002 in Hanoi and Ha Long. Approximately 6-8 US and 20 Vietnamese participants are expected. We are currently developing the agenda and should have it completed in the next 8-12 weeks.

Finally, we are looking forward to participating in the forthcoming State Department-led bilateral Science and Technology Agreement meeting, tentatively scheduled for mid-November in Hanoi. Accordingly, we are recommending to the State Department that the AID-NOAA project be included in the meeting agenda with Vietnam to raise the awareness and appreciation of "integrated coastal management" as both a conceptual framework and operational mechanism relevant to Vietnam's coastal development.

In short, the project is moving forward. The people and institutions assembled are capable and enthusiastic. Our partnership project with AID through the EAPEI is a priority for NOAA. We appreciate the opportunity AID has provided to leverage resources with us to support sound coastal development in Vietnam.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Justi

cc: Charles N. Ehler
NM. Thong, IUCN-Vietnam